April 8th

WOMAN IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

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One of the most striking results of the emancipation of women has been their immediate and successful appearance in arts previously confined almost exclusively to men. In music this has been especially noticeable. While the woman writer has been known since Sappho, the woman composer is a modern phenomenon. Woman's voice has long been heard in music, but her ability to play an instrument is still accorded only partial recognition. But gradually the last barriers of prejudice are being removed.

No one has done more to remove them than the Society of Women Musicians, which " comes of age " this year, having been founded on July 15th, 1911, with Liza Lehmann as its first president. This is not a fanatical feminist organisation. It exists as a representative body to safeguard the interests of women musicians and to provide a centre where they can meet. It affords invaluable opportunities for composers and performers to get together, and advises the former in all matters of publishing and copyright.

It has won public recognition for women in music not by propaganda but by performance. The recitals, lectures, and conferences which are frequently held on the Society's premises at 74 Grosvenor Street, London, W.1, have in themselves attracted the notice and appreciation of the leading critics, while the wider effects of the Society's stimulus upon the work of its members cannot be estimated. Its past Presidents include a number of distinguished women, the first being Liza Lehman, who was succeeded by Emily R. Daymond, Mus.D., Cecile C. Chaminade, Katharine Eggar, Marion Scott, Gertrude Eaton, Marie Brema, The Lady Mary Trefusis, Kathleen Schlesinger, F.I.A. (Univ. Liverpool), Adine O'Neill (Mrs. Norman O'Neill), Agnes Larkcom, F.R.A.M., Fanny Davies, Evangeline Florence, and Rosa Newmarch.

This year the President is Mrs. Cecil Harcourt, better known in musical circles as Miss Evelyn Suart. Miss Suart has had a brilliant career as a pianiste, though she is all too rarely heard to-day, and stands in the front rank of women musicians. She studied in Brussels under Storck, in Paris under Pugno, and in Vienna under Leschetizky, making her debut in the last city in 1900. Appearing at the Queen's Hall later in the same year, she achieved a record for a debutante by the number of her engagements. Since then she has played in most of the musical centres of England and Europe, made six tours, and established herself beyond doubt as one of the pioneers of modern music. Dame Ethel Smyth, D.B.E., D.Mus., and Miss Myra Hess are Hon. Vice-Presidents of the Society.

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